

The Glasgow Keelie

JULY 1991

GOING FOR A SONG

Glasgow: is Privatisation the name of the Game?

The speed with which Pat Lally has embraced private enterprise beggars belief.

Not only is he the chairman of Glasgow Cultural Enterprise Ltd, the company newly formed to take over the Royal Concert Hall, he also intends to privatise the letting of homes. At present all new houses being built are under private contracts and will be handed over to Scottish Homes after they are completed.

It should be remembered that the new Concert Hall was built from the insurance cash received when the old St Andrews Hall was burned down. Unfortunately it was not a "Royal" Hall but then again when the old Hall was in its heyday there were still a few socialists in the old Glasgow Corporation.



● SURPRISE! SURPRISE! Pat Lally, the man who tried to privatise Glasgow Green, and is busy flogging off the City's assets is Chairman of the Council's Anti Privatisation Committee ...

Danny Crawford, that other torch-bearer for private enterprise, has now decided to leave the district council to take up a £20,000 plus job with the Glasgow District Health Board. No doubt his record as a convener with the district council as far as privatisation is concerned will be welcomed by Mr Peterken, the Thatcheरite who has handed over most of the service jobs in the Health departments and hospitals to contractors. You can be sure however that the decisive rejection by the ordinary people of Glasgow of Mr Crawford's plans to give a third of the Glasgow Green to the ailing leisure companies helped to speed him on his way.

The scandal now being exposed in the Parks Department is an indictment of the policies being pursued by Lally and the Labour group. They were warned about the type of people they had recruited from Edinburgh. Their association with private leisure firms was well known and it is to be hoped that the buck will not stop at the dismissal of a few crooks, and councillors

will not be allowed to renege on their responsibility; after all they appointed the crooks.

One would have thought that after the financial fiasco of Glasgow's Glasgow that some lessons would have been learned; not a bit. Even after the Words and the Stones Ltd. (the company that ran Glasgow's Glasgow) had gone into liquidation with debts of several million their pets like Doug Clelland, the director of the exhibition, were laughing all the way to the bank.

Is it not about time the people of Glasgow challenged the right of people like Crawford and Lally to raid the public purse without the people's consent? They are only representatives; they do not speak for the overwhelming majority and have shown their disdain for the people's wishes.

The battle cry should be that no public assets or public property should be sold or lived off without the vote or consent of the people. We do not want Lally power: we want people power.

Connolly, Corruption and the Leisure Business

About eight years ago Bernard Connolly applied for the post of Parks Supervisor with Glasgow District Council but failed because he didn't have the necessary qualifications. Then he landed a job with the Parks department in Manchester. (It was from this city that Count Dracula's gang enticed Julian "the Leech" Spalding.) From there Connolly moved to a job in the contracts' section in Leicester's local authority. He left there in a hurry. There was a contracts' scandal breaking. But still, he managed to win the top job in Edinburgh for his efforts (although at one stage he was summoned back to Leicester to discuss his own involvement or lack of involvement during the contracts' scam).

It wasn't long before Dracula and the gang decided this was the ideal man for Glasgow. Connolly's newfound "qualifications" were ideal for the hatchet-job they needed doing here. But the Town Clerk recommended that Connolly should NOT be employed by the Council because of his shady past. Maybe Personnel forgot to tell him that this shady past was what Lally meant by "qualifications". It was this that made him the right man for the job, exactly what the Labour/CBI coalition at George Square was looking for.

So Connolly became the new Director of Parks and Recreation. No sooner in the job than he was contributing to the victimisation of Elspeth King. Then he tried to sack Michael Donnelly, he got together his own team of heavies under the guise of "security staff", four of whom physically threatened an elderly member of the Workers' City group during last year's "Cultural Celebrations". As far as the ordinary workers of the Parks Department are concerned, they would have as much chance under Rupert Murdoch. Connolly has ruthlessly doubled the Tory Government's recommendations on privatisation to a massive 60%. 790 workers have been paid off since his arrival. Some were

offered redeployment with the private company that "won the contract" at a 40% cut in wages.

Now Connolly is working hand-in-glove with "Leech" Spalding, "Toad" O'Neil and the rest of the jobs-for-the-boys outfit, transforming the Peoples' Palace success into failure. A very common practice when a business wants to "asset-strip". First you run it down. He was also in there helping his political masters in their bid to sell off a third of Glasgow Green to - lo and behold - "selected" Leisure Companies.

And wasn't it a nice "stroke of luck" that his own personal "politeo", Cllr Danny Crawford, just happened to resign office before last month's scandal erupted, which resulted in Deputy-director Robert Hulbert getting the bullet for being a shareholder in Contemporary Leisure Ltd. Hulbert also worked in Edinburgh. He was Connolly's deputy there as well. His other deputy was Douglas Stewart. Who is Douglas Stewart? Why is he a director of Contemporary Leisure, which is based - surprise surprise - in Leicester. No wonder the Fraud Squad has moved their investigation to Edinburgh. Next stop Leicester, then Manchester...

But the people of Glasgow have some questions that must be answered. The character of Bernard Connolly is obvious to one and all; if he's not as bent as a cork screw then we apologise. So how come Lally and the gang overruled the recommendations of the Town Clerk and fought to get their own man at all costs? (As they did with Spalding.) What was Crawford's true position with the Leisure industry before he resigned? Why did Lally commit himself with such hysterical ruthlessness to the huge leisure and recreation project for Flesher's Haugh? If he is "clean" then fine. But people have a long memory. Lally's involvement with the recreation industry - social clubs in Springburn to be exact - led to his dismissal from the Council a decade and a half ago.

Hurting the Asbestos Victims

In the last Keelie we mentioned the nightmare situation facing thousands of asbestos victims and their families. Remember the figures: 300 of those who went into Clydeside Action for help last year are now dead. Now the latest news breaks: members of the Government want to aid the suffering millionaires at Lloyds who are "forced" to settle the legitimate claims of asbestos victims.

Imagine the Tories bailing out the bookies with the punters' money because they had one bad day at Ascot. The other 364 were okay, the profits as massive as usual, but on this one day of the year a few of the punters knocked it off. That sums up the situation.

The vast proportion of claims are from the U.S.A. This is because justice exists there in a way that it doesn't at home. How could it when some of the 'names' associated with the world's biggest insurance bookies are actually members of the government!

One of the 62 Tory MP 'names' is Ian Lang. As Scottish Secretary of State he is the man at the top. His is the last court of refuge for asbestos victims and their families. But what chance have you got in any court where the judge is one of the very people who gains financially by denying your claim? It's an obscene

SICK CITY by Ollie Jay

Piles of Greater Glasgow Health Board's answer to *Pravda, The Bulletin*, can be seen littering many a hospital corridor, shunned by staff and visitors alike. What can it be about this fine publication that they don't like? Can it be the numerous happy smiling pictures of Larry Peterken and Board Chairperson T.J. Thompson? Or perhaps it's the highly informative articles on yet another deal with the "private sector". Or perhaps it's because it's a lot of glossy shifty propaganda.

RAT JOINS SINKING SHIP

Glad to have Councillor Danny Crawford join us on board the good ship GGHB. Councillor Crawford will be joining the new central Health Council as its lucratively paid secretary. This new Health Council is meant to replace the smaller local Health Councils as the public's voice in the NHS. In reality the committee is packed with Tories - with only one of their number coming from within the Glasgow area - so at least Danny won't feel alone.

Interesting to note that the Labour Party's policy is to return to the old system of smaller Health Councils. Why then has a Labour politician taken up a job that, if Labour win the next election, will only last 1 year? It will be interesting to see how vigorously Danny campaigns for a Labour victory next year.

GGHB's proposals for job sharing schemes have just been announced. If one of the job sharers leaves the job then the other person will not automatically be offered the job. Sounds like a good wheeze for getting rid of more staff.

"No Way" Mutter

During this week the tribunal heard Michael Donnelly's appeal against unfair dismissal. The Keelie phoned the City Chambers and asked to speak to Councillor "My Way" Mutter. We were told he was unavailable because he was attending the tribunal in question. Meanwhile at the tribunal, Mutter's absence was being explained by officials, it was on account of his visit to Turkey on "Council business". No comment.

situation.

Every single institution in this country is geared to stop asbestos victims receiving justice. From the medical profession to the legal profession, from the DHSS to the political process itself. Money talks. One family of aristocrats (the Westminsters) donated £13.5 million alone to last year's slush fund - it exists to stop justice.

Such people literally profit from the dead and suffering. Their power and influence is what the victims are up against. And apart from self-help organisations like Clydeside Action they are forced to fight alone. It was no surprise that the Labour Party's first response was to back the suffering millionaires. The part played by the Labour Party and trades union hierarchy is a disgrace to the Labour Movement. Instead of fighting on behalf of the victims of industrial disease the Labour leadership fight for those who dirty their hands in profiting by it. Asbestos is a cancer on society. So too is greed.

Keelie Comment

When any public servants protest what they see as injustice, what they believe to be a betrayal of the common purpose by their paymasters, as in the case of Michael Donnelly and the People's Palace Affair, they are disciplined despite their courage and integrity.

They are branded as ingrates and are cast out. Those who daily see injustice, corruption and cynicism are thereby warned that if they speak out, they too will be Donnellyed. The workers in the departments of the District council, the Regional Council, Government officials, et al. are muzzled into compliance with this corruption because the alternative is unemployment and unemployability.

Yet they are not the villains, they are not the unprincipled rascals who daily betray the people in a hundred and a thousand mean minded self-serving ways, lying and cheating and stealing the confidence of the people they are supposed to serve.

Handclapping and backscratching they strut the chambers of power and manipulate the public purse and watch out anyone who exposes their lying hypocrisy.